

Chapter 62 - Jane Face's Petra

3rd Person

"What's wrong?" Ethan asked nervously, afraid of hearing one more word of bad news in this horrendous week.

"We don't have enough on Eve to get a warrant for her arrest. The only evidence we can find is circumstantial." The investigator sighed.

"I thought you said she was growing the flowers used for the poison?" Ethan growled, his head reeling. "And after the car accident, and that recording? She's the only one who has motive!"

"The flowers are a common garden plant, half the residents in the city have them." The investigator answered. "And yes, the brakes were cut on her car, but we can't prove she did it. At best we can make a case for criminal negligence and child endangerment between having Paisley in the front seat and encouraging her to run away."

"Then arrest her for that!" Ethan insisted.

"She would be out on bail within the hour." The detective replied, "if we want to convince a judge that she's too

dangerous to be out among the public, we need to get her on attempted murder. We just don't have a strong enough case at the moment though. I'm not saying we won't keep working, I'm just saying it isn't going to be fast."

"This is unbelievable." Ethan snarled, "Every second that woman is free, my child is at risk. Mark my words, if Eve remains on the loose, someone else is going to get hurt." He couldn't help but think that now Jane was back, she and the other pups might be in danger too. If Eve knew they were his and was willing to kill in order to get one child out of the way, what might she do in order to get Jane and the others out of the way too?

"I'm very sorry sir." The investigator assured the Alpha, truly meaning it.

"What if I ordered you to arrest her anyway?" Ethan inquired, spiraling slightly, "what if I ordered that she not be released on bail?"

"Alpha, are you suggesting..." The man tried to figure out how to push back with accusing his Alpha of a crime, "Eve has rights too... if we did that, it would be considered a miscarriage of justice."

Goddess damn it! Ethan thought ferociously, recalling the last time he put Justice over his family. He'd ended up punishing Jane for a crime she didn't commit, leading to

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the divorce and everything since. He couldn't risk making that kind of mistake again, after all, Eve had engineered the event that led to that catastrophe as well. "It's my right as Alpha to overrule the law in matters of pack security. This woman is a danger to the public – get the damn warrants, I'll deal with the judge."

A beat of silence floated through the phone, and for a moment Ethan thought the detective might refuse, but eventually he caved. "Yes sir."

When Jane returned from the hospital the next day, she was surprised and frustrated to find Ethan's mother waiting for her. Walking into the penthouse, which had actually been cleaned up remarkably well after the fight – not hard considering Ethan didn't have any choice except to basically buy all new furniture for the common areas after destroying everything – she saw her pups gathered around their grandmother in the kitchen.

They were baking cookies from the smell of it, and all four children were covered in flour. Of course, that didn't stop them from running to Jane and throwing their arms around her. "Hello muffins," she greeted them warmly, "you look like you're having fun, what are you making?" "Choco chip cookies!" Parker exclaimed, "Paisley's really good at it."

"She's had a lot of practice." Petra said sweetly, grinning at the kids and then leveling Jane with a very cold gaze, "I would have taught all of you if you'd been here with us."

"They're here now, Mom." Ethan replied in a tone brooking no argument, "that's what matters."

Petra grumbled something under her breath, but then the oven dinged behind her, and the pups began excitedly trying to wriggle out of Jane's arms. "They're ready!" They cried, "Mommy, let go - it's cookies!"

"But what about my hugs?" Jane teased, only able to keep hold of Ryder and Paisley as Riley and Parker galloped back into the kitchen.

Ryder was squirming to get away, "You 'ready got hugs Mommy, it's cookies!" He said, repeating Riley's earlier words.

Unlike her brother, Paisley seemed content to stay in Jane's arms, snuggling in even after Riley escaped. "I'll hugs you, Mommy."

"That's my cuddle bug." Ethan praised, leaning down to drop a kiss on her head, then sneaking one on Jane's as well.

"Or maybe she's just used to cookies." Jane suggested wryly, ignoring the Alpha's sneak kiss.

"No." Paisley corrected, pulling back to look Jane in the

eye with a sober expression, "Mommy's are just better than cookies."

Jane felt herself tearing up, and pulled the pup back into her arms. "Well you'll always have a Mommy now, little one." She vowed, making Petra look up with suspicion. Ethan hadn't told his mother about his deal with Jane, telling her only that she would be moving in with the pups. Petra had badgered him with dozens of questions, not the least of which was how he could ever trust a woman who faked her death and his his pups from him, but Ethan put his foot down. "They're moving in and that's final, we can talk about it more after you return from the spa."

"Careful baby." Ethan advised as Jane rose up, carrying Paisley with her.

"I'm fine Ethan, stop fussing over me like a mother hen." Jane argued, squeezing Paisley and rocking her from side to side.

The little girl giggled and reached out one arm to her father, wanting him in on the hug. "Daddy likes to fuss lots."

Ethan gladly accepted his daughter's invitation and moved to put his arms around Jane and Paisley, sneaking more kisses along the way. "I have two very good reasons to fuss right here." He remarked, and three more in the

kitchen, he added silently to himself.

Riley appeared beside them then, "Paisley come on!" She encouraged, "they're almost cool enough to eat." Turning her face up to Ethan, she grinned. "You're all floury."

"I am," Ethan agreed, looking down at himself. "I wonder how that happened?"

"I know how," Riley told him brightly, throwing her arms around his legs, "Like this!"

"And on that note, I think it's a good idea for everyone to get cleaned up before we go gobbling down cookies." Petra announced, putting the last trays into the oven.

"I'll take them." Ethan offered, pulling Paisley from Jane's arms, he murmured, "You should rest."

Rolling her eyes, Jane raised her voice over the loud protestations of her children. "The faster you wash up the faster you get to have a cookie - last one to the bathroom is a rotten egg.

The kids took off in a tear, and Ethan watched them with arched brows, "I'll have to remember that one."

As he strode off to oversee cleanup, Jane moved into the kitchen. "It's good to see you, Petra."

The elder woman glared at her, "I hope you don't think you can just walk back into my son's life after everything you did."

"I guess we're done with the pleasantries." Jane muttered, dragging her hand through her hair.

"As far as I'm concerned you should be behind bars. Faking your death that way – I never understood what my son saw in you but losing you destroyed him. No parent should have to see their child in such pain." She snapped, throwing dirty bowls and spatulas into the sink.

"I'm a mother now too." Jane reminded her, "So I truly feel for you, Petra. I'm sorry."

Petra blinked, clearly expecting – if not wanting – a fight.

"And you left previous Paisley behind! I suppose you didn't want to lose all the money her medical care would cost you after you stole Ethan blind in the divorce."

Jane straightened her shoulders, "Say whatever you like about my morality Petra, but don't you dare question my love for Paisley. Ethan was the only one who could help her, I never would have left her otherwise."

"You should have left all of them if you wanted to be so selfish." Petra growled. "Keeping an Alpha's pups from him is worse even than faking your death."

Ethan didn't tell you?" Jane asked, raising her brows.

"Tell me what?" Petra demanded.

"The kids aren't his." Jane announced.

"You're full of it." Petra scoffed. "You forget I raised him,

your boys could have been his twins.”

“Believe what you like, I’m not here to walk back into Ethan’s life or make yours any difficult. I came back because of Paisley. I’ll be out of your hair before you know it.”

Petra’s eyes widened as Jane’s words clicked in her mind. Before she could reply however, the pups came rushing back in from the other room. Instead the elegant woman closed her mouth tight, and tried to process what she’d learned. She didn’t believe for one second that the pups were not Ethan’s, and she’d be damned if she would allow Jane to steal them from him a second time. She was certain that was what the little gold digger intended.

After she cleaned the kitchen, she pulled out her phone and began searching for DNA testing laboratories outside of the territory. She knew Jane had managed to fake or intercept the test Ethan had done on her here in the city, but the scheming creature couldn’t stop her from finding out the truth elsewhere. Before she even returned to the kitchen to take the last tray from the oven, she’d ordered a test kit with overnight shipping. Now she merely had to collect some DNA samples - it would be only too easy.

